

working father of two, delivers pizza because he is too proud to accept welfare.

He is not alone in this endeavor, but it is nearly impossible to know how many young servicemen are in this position, because most of them hide it from their commanders.

A young Lance Corporal serving in the Marine Corps today can anticipate being combat-deployed at least once in a 4-year enlistment. I wonder what this Lance Corporal's family will do when he is away and they have to make do without the supplemental income from Dominoes? I am humbled by this young Marine, and many others like him who work so hard to protect us. I am ashamed that we do not do right by them.

I urge this body to seriously consider the ethics of our government's continued overextension of our military in light of our complete lack of gratitude for their service.

Mr. Speaker, I have a request to make of the Members of this body. Tonight, when they go home to their families and when we go to the security and comfort of our own homes, when we tuck our young children in bed and say a prayer, we need to say a prayer for the men and women of our armed forces.

As we sleep, approximately 100,000 of them stand watch away from their own loved ones, ready to give their very lives to protect us, for as little as \$6.70 an hour.

Mr. Speaker, I think this Congress must begin to understand that there is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of active duty military today and the treatment of the veterans of yesterday's service. Retention, morale, readiness, these words are euphemisms used to disguise the real problem our military faces: A complete lack of faith that their government will take good care of them.

Why should our active duty servicemen believe us? Veterans in my district are feeling the effects of cuts in the veterans budgets. Veterans hospitals in Salt Lake City and Spokane are suffering from cutbacks and layoffs which impact patient care, as well as those hospitals, veterans hospitals, in Boise, Idaho. There are waiting lists for surgery and fewer options for long-term care. We have broken our promises.

A sign in front of the Boise Veterans' Medical Center reads "The price of freedom is visible here." But indeed, it is. Unfortunately, in our society, a select few pay that price. They are our veterans. They are our heroes, and they must fight for the health care benefits that we promised them.

We expected our veterans to fight for us abroad, but it breaks my heart when they have to come home and fight for their privileges that were promised them at home.

Mr. Speaker, veterans are forced into one final choice between their home and their patriotism. No Idaho veteran may be laid to rest in his home State in a dedicated field of honor. That is because my home State is the only State in the Union which does not have a veterans cemetery.

Veterans represent approximately 10 percent of Idaho's population. There are nearly 100,000 combat veterans in Idaho, about a third of whom served our Nation in World War II. Our average World War II veteran is 76 years old. These heroes are now passing away. This summer when veterans organizations call the roll of those who have died in the last year, they will read 3,500 names in Idaho, and not one will be able to be buried in an Idaho veterans cemetery. There is not an Idaho veterans cemetery.

That is why I am introducing legislation which will provide Idaho with a veterans cemetery. This bill answers a critical need Idaho faces. In pressing for a veterans' cemetery, I have the support of the entire Idaho congressional delegation, the State veterans organizations, our Governor, the Idaho legislature, and the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP).

In fact, last month, the Idaho legislature passed Joint Memorial No. 1, which urgently requested a veterans cemetery, stating, and I quote, "It is fitting and proper that a grateful Nation should provide a burial site within a reasonable distance from the homes of those Idahoans and others residing in the northwestern States who honorably served their country in a time of emergency."

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe this case can be overstated. We in this body must begin to take very seriously our commitment to the armed forces. We cannot just try to make piecemeal repairs. We must begin to demonstrate a genuine commitment to improve the quality of life for our veterans and our active duty servicemen and women.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I was forced to vote no on the Kosovo emergency supplemental. That was a very painful and difficult vote for me. On the one hand, I hate to pass up a chance to rectify the wrongs brought down on our military in the past 6 years.

I always welcome the chance to give something back to our servicemen, but I cannot fund an illegal war. I cannot condone this military action, this terrible descent into a protracted conflict in which the American people have no stake whatsoever. I care about our troops too much to remain silent as they are led to this battlefield.

Mr. Speaker, last month this body had the opportunity to fulfill its constitutional role and declare war on the people of Kosovo. All but two, all but two 2 Members balked at that final

act. It seems that the only thing this body can agree on in this matter is that the people of Kosovo are not our enemies. Why, then, are we bombing them? Why are we destroying their capital?

I do not understand the answer to this question, Mr. Speaker, and I cannot let the temptation to provide our servicemen their due at this time dissuade me from my obligation to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution.

Had I voted to fund the war I had voted against declaring. I would have compromised the very principles these young people have fought for in the past. I would have voted to violate the Constitution. Worse, Mr. Speaker, this supplemental amounted to nothing less than blackmail. The Members of this body were offered a choice: Support the troops and the beluga whale and the House pages and the University of the District of Columbia and Washington Metropolitan Air Traffic and whatever other random provision was added, or do not support the troops at all. It is a shameful situation, what was added to the so-called emergency supplemental. It is a testament to the way the military has been constantly used by us, improperly used.

The fact is our military is being attacked by its most dangerous opponent, our own civilian command. This Kosovo supplemental was proof that we are not committed enough as a government or powerful enough as a Congress to undo the damage that already has been done. It is time to move from piecemeal repairs after the fact to proper recognition, support, and honor throughout.

In a time when we were threatened, they defended us. In a time when we were afraid, they kept their courage. In a time when we have discarded patriotism, they still salute their flag, honor their Commander in Chief, and serve the ideals of American freedom.

Mr. Speaker, we must show them, our heroes of past conflict and those who stand guard as we speak, that we care, that we are grateful, that we will not fail them.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DEUTSCH (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for after 3:00 p.m. today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. STARK (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for after 1:00 p.m. today on account of official business.

Mr. FOLEY (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for after 1:00 p.m. today on account of receiving an honorary doctorate degree from Northwood University.